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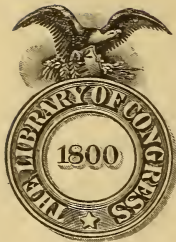
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IN MEMORIAM.



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IN MEMORIAM.





Eng. by A. H. Ritchie

Sincerely & Affect. Yrs yours
Thomas Stokes

IN MEMORIAM:
A
Biographical Sketch
OF
THOMAS STOKES.

BY
JAMES S. DICKERSON, D.D.

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IN MEMORIAM.

THE moral dignity of the missionary enterprise invests with peculiar and sacred interest all the circumstances of its early origin, and all persons and events which have been vitally related to its subsequent history. Sufficient honor, perhaps, has been paid those illustrious names whose efforts and sacrifices have been conspicuously identified with the progress of this great movement of the modern church.

My object in this brief sketch, is to rescue the memory of one of those "veiled heroes" in the history of missions, whose zeal, among the very first to be kindled, burned with a steady flame; and whose influence was none the less providential and powerful because its field seemed to be more

circumscribed, and its methods more quiet and unobtrusive. And if to the design of making a humble contribution to the early history of missions, I unite a warm desire to honor the memory of one of my loved and venerated ancestors, the double motive will be none the less commended by the thoughtful and the good.

AN EVENTFUL LIFE.

THOMAS STOKES, a deacon of the Mulberry-street Baptist Church, New York, died in that city, October 10, 1832, aged 67 years,—closing a life of unusual Christian activity and eventfulness, in the full possession of all his mental faculties, and in calm and trustful reliance upon that Saviour by whose grace his life had been redeemed, and to whose service its best powers had been devoted. He left behind him a diary, kept during a portion of his lifetime, which, together with certain rare pamphlets and other printed matter illustrating the more important events to which it refers, has supplied most of the materials used in this memorial sketch.

The diary is prefaced with the remark that its author "was born in London in December, ^{13th} 1765,

and 'born again' in 1783." As the religious life of Mr. Stokes chiefly concerns us, and especially that part of it which was identified with early missionary history and efforts, we pass over the records of his youth, and notice that soon after he gave his heart to Jesus, he united himself with one of those bands of devoted Christians which had been led out from the Established Church of England by the active zeal and piety of Lady Huntingdon. Afterwards it was his privilege for a number of years to worship with the church under the pastoral care of Rowland Hill, of Surry Chapel, London. This faithful and honored preacher organized his people for missionary and Christian work in a way quite unusual in his day. He selected a company of devoted Christian men, who, under his direction, and animated by the spirit of their indefatigable pastor, went everywhere through the lanes, alleys, and outskirts of the metropolis, doing true missionary labor in its most destitute and neglected districts. Of this working band, Thomas Stokes appears to have been, at least, one of the most earnest and deeply interested. It was in Surry Chapel that Rowland Hill preached the celebrated

missionary sermon on the occasion of the first general meeting of the London Missionary Society in September, 1795, from the text, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come;" and at the close of the first meeting of the London Missionary Society he pronounced the benediction with a solemn invocation of the blessing of God on its designs. He was one of its first Board of Managers; was fervently attached to its interests; and a zealous and effective promoter of all its noble and beneficent designs. It was also in the vestry of Surry Chapel that the proposition was first made that the islands of the South Sea should be the scene of the commencement of its efforts.*

Mr. Stokes occupied a social position in London beset with the allurements of fashion, and exposed to the enticements of worldly society; still the records of his every-day life, which have survived him in the diary which has been placed at

* Newman Hall is the present pastor of Surry Chapel and carries out the original plans of Rowland Hill.

our service, give the most delightful evidence that his chief enjoyments were found in the society and communion of the people of God, and in active endeavors to bless the world with the knowledge of Jesus.

FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

It is no slight honor to the subject of this sketch that he was associated with the now celebrated Robert Raikes in his earliest efforts to organize Sunday schools in the city of London and its suburbs. Converted to God in 1783, the very year in which Raikes published his first accounts of the establishment of village schools on the sabbath day for the religious instruction and training of the children of the poor, the enthusiasm and love of this young disciple were easily won to the novel and inspiring movement. When the attempt was made to plant these schools in London, he gave to the design his hearty indorsement and his active co-operation. To him belongs a share, at least, of that honor and praise which have been gratefully awarded those whose arduous and self-sacrificing labors were blessed during the first five years of

Sunday-school effort, in bringing a quarter of a million of England's most neglected children under the gentle and saving influences of sabbath instruction.

THE DAWN OF MODERN MISSIONS.

There is no portion of this simple and unaffected diary which is so full of intense interest to the Christian reader, or which reflects so hallowed a light over the character, spirit, and life of him who in the privacy of his devotional hours penned it, as that which refers to the very inception and infancy of the modern missionary enterprise, and to the circumstances which led to the formation of that venerable and God-honored instrumentality, — the London Missionary Society.

The solemn utterances of William Carey in 1791 respecting the moral accountability of the heathen, and the duty of enlightened Christians to labor for their salvation, had fallen on the ear of a slumbering church like the awakening voice of a prophet. As early as 1792, over the whole United Kingdom there seemed to be felt a new and an intense anxiety for the conversion of the

idolatrous millions of the East. Christians of every name, and everywhere, simultaneously arose at the call of the Master. We know of no more impressive argument for the supernatural origin, unity, and forces of the kingdom of Christ than this sudden and general uprising. Nothing less than a stroke commanded and inspired by the Holy One could have evoked this outgush of missionary impulse and devotion from the hitherto rocky insensibility of a faithless church. Already these "streams in the desert" were gathering available force and volume in the organization of the Baptist Missionary Society of England, Oct. 2, 1792, and their unhindered flow was yet, through its benign instrumentality, and that of the London Missionary Society, soon to be formed, to bless through all coming time the thirsty nations and the remotest lands.

The mind of Thomas Stokes seemed from the very first to grasp with an intelligent and far-sighted faith the entire subject of missions, their imperative necessity and solemn importance, their practicability and prospective results. His whole soul was evidently enlisted, and he was ready to

lay upon the altar his best endeavors and a generous offering of the pecuniary gifts with which God had abundantly blessed him. As early as 1783, he speaks of a correspondence which he had carried on with Christians throughout the kingdom, urging upon them the duty and importance of sending the gospel to the heathen. He also speaks of attending meetings for prayer and consultation on the most efficient means for commencing and carrying on systematic missionary operations. These may be considered as some of the early missionary meetings which were afterwards merged into the stated monthly concert of prayer; and as each person subscribed two pounds for defraying any expenses incurred in prosecuting the general design, they may be ranked with the very earliest of organized missionary instrumentalities. Mr. Stokes regarded as an event worthy of especial and congratulatory notice in his journal, the establishment of the "Evangelical Magazine" in 1793, to be a medium of missionary intelligence, "the profits of which are to be applied to the support of the widows and orphans of deceased ministers of the gospel." A complete set of this magazine,

from the beginning, is among the valuable missionary documents preserved as a part of Mr. Stokes' cherished effects.

THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The prayer-meetings started in 1793 were favored with an interest so marked and increasing, that in a few months it was deemed advisable to hold them publicly, every other week. Under these auspices, and with the divine blessing, the mission spirit was fanned into a glow of fervor; and these public demonstrations increased in numbers, spirit, and religious power, until, at length, they were superseded by the missionary organization to which they gave birth. We presume it is to the later power and efficiency of these very prayer-meetings, that reference is made by a writer who traced, in 1802, the immediate circumstances which led to the formation of the London Society, seven years before. He says,—

"A number of ministers in London, together with some of their country brethren, held, every fortnight during six months, a meeting for prayer and consultation on the most effectual means of commencing

and carrying on a mission among the heathen. This led them to circulate an address to the public, in the 'Evangelical Magazine' for January, 1795, and to send circular letters to ministers in each county, entreating their consideration of the subject; from many of them were received assurances of the most cordial approbation, and intimations that their own minds had previously been led to fervent prayer for the accomplishment of the laudable purpose."

The London Missionary Society was formed in September, 1795. Meetings were held on the 21st, 22d, 23d, and 24th: the first two were preliminary. Mr. Stokes speaks of attending with a glowing heart all the services of these memorable occasions. So crowded were the congregations, and so almost rapturous the awakened interest of the people, that it was firmly believed and openly declared, that God had surprised the century with "a new Pentecost of the church." Six famous sermons were preached during these meetings, copies of all of which Mr. Stokes has carefully preserved, bound in a tasteful volume.

Considering the circumstances under which they were delivered, in the sublimity of their devotion to the cause of the heathen, and in the seer-like

grasp with which they took in all the magnificent results which were yet to follow from the feeble, and by many despised, beginnings of which they were the heralds, these sermons may be regarded as almost inspired. From a rare copy of the printed minutes of these eventful meetings, we are able to fill out to some degree the too brief statements of Mr. Stokes' diary. In addition to many items of deepest interest, we are furnished with the names of the great and good men who preached the missionary sermons, and also with the texts on which their discourses were respectively founded. We give them in the order in which they were preached: the Rev. Thomas Hawies, of Aldwin-
kle, from Mark xvi. 15, 16; Rev. George Burder, Coventry, from Jonah iii. 2; Rev. Samuel Great-
head, Newport-Pagnell, from Luke x. 29; Rev. John Hey, Bristol, from Eph. i. 10; Rev. Rowland Hill, London, from Matt. xxiv. 14; Rev. David Bogue, Gosport, from Haggai i. 2.

A JUBILEE YEAR.

As he listened to these appeals, Mr. Stokes remarks that it was "with feelings of no ordinary

joy." He now beheld the gracious answers to prayers which for years had been mysteriously deferred; he now witnessed the joyful crowning of many hopes which had for a long time been cherished amid doubts and fears. Indifference to the cause of the heathen had passed almost entirely away, and inspiring songs were heard where once there had been but the solemn wrestling of faltering, and hence unanswered, prayer. Now were fulfilled the glowing prophecies of one who had sung anticipatory of heavenly triumphs, when

"Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

During the frequent and greatly prolonged sessions of public service, the churches were thronged with earnest and intelligent people; and when at times the preachers, in view of all the wondrous events which were transpiring about them, kindled with animated and contagious fervor, the pent-up emotions of the listening multitude could no longer be restrained, but found expression in mingled sobs and prayers and shouts of approval. The printed minutes above referred to confirm all the briefer records of Mr. Stokes' journal. They furnish the

following impressive and characteristic incident. At one of the meetings a minister arose to present a resolution recognizing the call of God in the summons of the church for the salvation of the heathen; but its passage was forestalled with such demonstrations of general and tender approval, that for a time the business of the meeting could not proceed, while many gave vent to their feelings in tears of joy.

Says a writer describing the scene during the delivery of the sermon by Rev. Mr. Bogue:—

“The whole vast body of people manifested their concurrence, and could scarcely refrain from one general shout of joy. Such a scene was perhaps never before beheld in our world, and afforded a glorious earnest of that nobler assembly where we shall meet all the redeemed, and in the presence and before the throne of the Lamb shall sing, as in the last hymn of the service,

‘Crown him, crown him, crown him Lord of all!’”

Mr. Stokes informs us, that at one of the first meetings held at the Castle and Falcon, the liberal designs of God’s people were already foreshadowed in a collection for missionary purposes amounting to nearly £800, or \$4,000!

THE FIRST MISSIONARY SHIP.

One of the immediate fruits of this great revival was the establishment of the mission to the South-Sea Islands. The first missionary ship, "The Duff," was soon fitted out, and sailed for Tahiti with twenty-nine missionaries on board, in September, 1796. Mr. Stokes gives abundant evidence of his lively interest in this marked event, and makes mention of the fact that he spent on board most of the two last days before she sailed, and was among the last to leave her deck as the almost sacred vessel spread her sails for heathen shores, and left the homes and altars of Christian England forever behind her.

The editor of the "Evangelical Magazine" thus describes the scenes connected with the departure of the missionaries:—

"Though they embarked at an early hour, vast multitudes attended. The deck was crowded, many of the directors and friends accompanying them down the river. As soon as the boats which brought off the missionaries were removed, the sails unfurled, the noise of the ropes and the moving to and fro of the sailors had ceased, that

beautiful hymn in the Countess of Huntingdon's collection was sung, 'Jesus, at thy command, we launch into the deep,' &c. The sailors in the ships on each side of the river, hearing the singing, stood in silent astonishment, and many serious persons on the shore waved their hats, bidding the dear servants of God farewell." "It is highly probable that, since the days of our Lord and his apostles, the bosom of the deep was never before graced with such a vessel. If a prodigy in the heavens above attracts universal notice, no one (we trust) will charge us with enthusiasm, if we express our grateful admiration of a sight so pleasing and unusual in the depths beneath. Surely the hand of the Lord hath been conspicuous in laying the beams of his chambers in the waters, and in establishing a household of faith upon the floods. Every serious person who has been on board, and seen the order which there prevails, and joined in the devotions there offered up, has been constrained to say, like Jacob of old, 'This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'"

The following lines commemorate the hour when "The Duff" was passing down the river, with the consecrated band on board:—

"Go, destined vessel, heavenly-freighted, go !
For, lo ! the Lord's ambassadors are there ;
Faith sits at helm, and Hope attends the prow,
While thousands swell thy sails with balmy prayer.

“Lo ! southern islanders incline the ear,
And pause attentive to the sacred word ;
Heralds of God, your embassy declare,
And win obedient nations to the Lord.”

The venerable Rev. Dr. Haweis who accompanied the missionaries on ship-board as far out the English Channel as beyond Portsmouth, thus graphically pictures his final parting with them: —

“We shook hands all round. I spoke to every brother a word, commending him to the keeping and care of our covenant God. The dear women, with tears streaming, wished me every blessing. The boat was waiting to convey me to the shore ; the evening approached ; our distance was considerable, but the day was beautifully fair. I stepped down the side of the ship, and cast many a mingled look of joy and reluctance behind me, till the ship faded from my view, and, mingling with the multitude of masts around her, was no longer distinctly visible. Early the next morning we looked out ; but they had turned the point, and the last of the convoy only was seen clearing the land at St. Helens. Ye people of God, follow them with your prayers !”

Even in these latter days of missionary history and experience, and to those who have often witnessed the consecration and departure of mission-

aries to their distant and difficult fields of labor, these parting scenes are always thrilling with the sad yet inspiring eloquence of self-sacrificing, Christian benevolence and lofty moral heroism; how much more impressive and stirring must have been the effect upon the popular heart and mind of this first embarkation, — this costly and experimental advance upon the dark and gloomy hosts of ignorant, barbarous and treacherous idolaters! We do not wonder at the universal interest which it evoked, or at the opposition which it received from the worldly and the faithless. It constituted, however, an epoch in the history of human redemption which shall have its oft-recurring celebrations amid the heavenly eras, when the heathen shall have been given to Christ as his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

A HOME IN THE WESTERN WORLD.

Not long after these notable events are recorded by Mr. Stokes, we find him revolving the project of leaving his native England, and making his home in this western world. His decision was reached in the spring of 1798, when, accompanied

with his wife, child, and servants, he embarked for New York. As communication was not then (as now) by regular lines of packets and steamers, he was obliged to charter a vessel at his own cost. He arrived at New York, in June, landing at the Battery.

A CHANGE OF VIEWS.

An act of courtesy, on the part of a stranger, an Englishman, extended to him just as his family had disembarked, introduced to him, under very favorable circumstances, a gentleman who was a Baptist. The acquaintance thus formed ripened into a friendship, which continued while he lived, and was the means of bringing him into the Baptist denomination. He was baptized in the East River, in 1807, by the Rev. Charles Lahatt, pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church, New York City.

When, under the efforts of the then young and eloquent preacher, Archibald Maclay, the Mulberry-street Baptist Church was gathered, Mr. Stokes united with that body, and was at once elected deacon, an office which he adorned until his death.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY ORGANIZATIONS.

The same zeal for missions which had characterized Mr. Stokes in his native land, continued to be a powerful impulse with him in after life. The conversion of Mr. and Mrs. Judson and Luther Rice to Baptist views, and their application for support as foreign missionaries, revived the spirit of missions among the Baptists of America, and they at once entered upon the work of Christianizing the heathen with a zeal which, with the favor of God, gave them a prominent position in the missionary field.

"The General Convention," which was the first organization of American Baptists for the promotion of foreign missions, was formed in Philadelphia, May 21, 1814. Mr. Stokes was present as a deeply interested spectator. His son, James Stokes, of New York City, accompanied him, and, in a letter recently received from him, recounts with much interest the incidents of that meeting, and of the impression made upon his mind, though then but a lad of some ten years of age, by the presence and utterances of those great and good men, — Staugh-

ton, Furman, Baldwin, and Rice. Of this organization, whether as "Convention" or "Missionary Union," Thomas Stokes continued a fast friend until the day of his death.

When in 1821, in consequence of failing health, John Cauldwell, Esq., the first treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Convention, was compelled to resign, Mr. Stokes consented to undertake the arduous and responsible duties of the position. But he soon became convinced that the treasurer could serve the interests of the Convention much more effectively, were he located in Boston, its financial headquarters. Accordingly in 1823 he retired from the office, upon which occasion the Convention gratefully and publicly recognized the value of his services and the spirit in which they had been rendered, in a record of thanks placed upon their minutes. The Hon. Heman Lincoln, of Boston, was appointed his successor.

FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

While Mr. Stokes' convictions as a Baptist were both strong and clearly defined, his large Christian liberalities of heart and of hand brought him into

close and warm sympathy with all the true followers of Christ, and especially with those who were most actively engaged in His service.

Hence when in 1816 it was proposed in New-York City to form an organization which should enlist the interest and efforts of all American Christians in the translation and circulation of the word of God, without note or comment, as the British and Foreign Society had evoked and marshalled the sympathies of their English brethren in behalf of the same object, he cordially approved the design, and gave an unwonted, personal attention to the founding and subsequent affairs of the American Bible Society. He was a member of its first Board of Managers, a liberal contributor to its funds, and a life-long friend of the noble cause for which that organization has so long, so earnestly, and so successfully appealed.

NEW-YORK PEACE SOCIETY.

He was also associated with William Ladd, David L. Dodge, and Anson G. Phelps, as founders of the New-York Peace Society, with whose beneficent mission his spirit was ever in peculiar

and living sympathy. In his contemplations of the growing empire and coming triumphs of King Emmanuel, his soul ever seemed to drink in a new and a higher inspiration from the thought that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." And yet Mr. Stokes belonged to that line of our noblest ancestors to whom the present owes a debt that can hardly be over-estimated, as it can never be repaid, — a national ancestry who made large and costly sacrifices in order peacefully to secure the religious and political liberties which form alike the glory and the strength of this great Republic. Indeed, love for these great principles, with a strong desire to witness their triumph and to enjoy their benefits, made him willing to surrender the comforts and delights of his early home and to sever the sacred and joyous associations which bound him to his native land. He must be ranked among those quiet and conscientious but sturdy men, who, while they were actuated by a warm love for soul-liberty, and an earnest and honest desire that it should be universally acknowledged and respected, were also constitutionally

averse to war and all angry contention. His efforts to promote the cause of righteous and universal peace were instinctive and persistent, and never ceased until he ceased to live.

THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

When in 1825 the friends of a pure and sanctified literature in the city of New York banded together in the formation of the American Tract Society, Mr. Stokes was found in the front rank of those who were relied upon to promote its success. He assisted in its organization and was placed upon its first Board of Managers. His name is inscribed among its earliest life-members; and the responsible post of Chairman of the Committee on Distribution, to which he was assigned by the Board at its very formation, he held until called to a higher position in the presence and at the summons of the Master.

At the anniversary of the Tract Society held subsequently to the death of Mr. Stokes, his life and his departure were thus feelingly alluded to in the report of the Board: —

"Mr. Thomas Stokes, a devoted friend of this Society from the time of its formation, and Chairman of the Committee on Distribution, has during the year entered into rest. He was engaged in those early missionary operations in London which gave character to the present century; and until the close of his life persevered in his kind and Christian endeavors, cordially co-operating with all, of every name, who were engaged in his Master's service."

SOCIAL ABUSES.

It is still, doubtless, within the memory of many of the living that there was a time when, especially in the city of New York, and among a very respectable class of its people, wines and other intoxicating drinks were freely dispensed at funerals, until the custom led to many and disgraceful violations of all the decorum and solemn proprieties of such occasions. It was also quite customary in those days for the pall-bearers and the gentlemen among the immediate mourners at funerals, to wear long streaming scarfs of black silk, or other rich and expensive material, which, however easily provided by the wealthy, necessitated a severe and almost ruinous tax upon those

who could not afford them ; to which, from sheer fear of a false and captious public opinion, they were reluctantly obliged to submit.

The quick sensibilities of Mr. Stokes were deeply wounded by these injurious and useless fashions of the society of that day ; and yet owing to the delicate relations which these customs held to the hospitable entertainment of sympathizing friends and to the expression of sorrow for the dead, which is both natural and proper, as well as out of respect for the sensitive feelings of bereaved and stricken mourners, he dreaded to cope with evils which, confessed by all, were daily becoming more dangerous and excessive. But, at length, he courageously set himself to work, greatly favored in the full co-operation of General Matthew Clarkson, and a few other earnest, sensible men, who, like himself, were not only impressed with the necessity of a correction of these abuses, but were themselves ready to inaugurate a reform. So judiciously and successfully did they enlighten and organize public opinion that the evils were almost at once abated, and soon, in that particular form at least, passed entirely away.

DECLINING YEARS.

After Mr. Stokes had reached his sixty-sixth birthday, Dec. 13, 1831, he was noticeably less disposed to public life and labors, and more and more inclined to retire from secular responsibilities and anxieties. A vivid and ever-present presentiment soon after seized upon his mind that his life's work was nearly done, and that death's summons would not be long deferred. He began calmly to set his house in order, never forgetful of those business preparations for dying, the neglect of which on his part might entail inconvenience or loss on those who should survive him.

A short time before his death, after having finally arranged all his worldly affairs with the aid and advice of his only and tenderly loved brother, Judge William Armstrong Stokes, he signed the last paper demanding his signature, and then calmly remarked, "William, I shall sign the name of Thomas Stokes no more." From that hour he sought the retirement of his chamber, and much of the time, alone and in prayer, seemed most of

all wrestling to wean himself from his loved and loving family. While no specific form of disease preying upon him could be traced, it soon became evident to all that he was gradually sinking towards the grave. The atmosphere of an unseen world seemed to shed its sacred and peaceful light into the room where the good man lay, illuminating every feature of his venerable and benevolent countenance. His frame of mind was one of calm yet cheerful resignation, constantly illustrating the precious truth that they who find their joy in the service of Christ through life, will in dying experience the sweetness of His communion and the power of His saving presence.

When the morning of Oct. 10, 1832, dawned, it was quite apparent that his last hours drew nigh. As the day declined and the circle of his friends drew closer and closer around his dying-bed, the last accents of worship and of prayer which, as a fitting cadence to such a life of trust and love, fell from his sainted lips, were "blessed Jesus!" and it was difficult to tell whether these sweet words were the rising spirit's farewell to earth, or its first rapturous greeting to heaven.

THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED.

The passing away of a venerable man, a patriotic and public-spirited citizen, and an active and greatly respected Christian, could but produce a marked impression. His funeral was largely attended, and his departure from among the living seemed to be universally and sincerely mourned in the great metropolis where he was so well and so widely known.

When the news of the death of Mr. Stokes was announced to the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society, they entered upon their records the following notice of their departed fellow-laborer:—

“By ordinary visitation the Managers are called to notice the death of one of their number,—Mr. Thomas Stokes, of New York. This worthy associate had been a member of the Board and discharged his duties with great cheerfulness and acceptance from the commencement of the Society in 1816.”

At the ensuing anniversary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, after alluding to his

death, the Managers paid a brief tribute to his memory in the following words:—

“Thomas Stokes, who served the Board for several years as their Treasurer, was an ardent friend to the cause of missions, and endeared himself to all his brethren by his piety, his pure integrity, and his amiable manners.”

Thus honorably and beautifully closed a long, active, and eventful Christian life, which in its first youthful promise had been turned from the vanities and short-lived pleasures of the world and consecrated to the service and honor of Christ. It affords but another and an apt illustration of the real and practical value of a personal interest in the promises of Him who hath said, “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; . . . with long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

THE LESSONS OF A LIFE.

How instructive and inspiring are the lessons which spring from such a career, inculcating, as they do, faith and a cheerful obedience in undertaking any commission which bears the seal of the

Master's approval, no matter how small or inauspicious the beginnings, or in how marked contrast they may stand to great and illustrious ends which they are designed to accomplish!

When, less than a century ago, under the leadership of the philanthropic printer of Gloucester, the recently converted Thomas Stokes, as one of a small band of active Christians, aided in the establishment of Sunday schools among the poor children of London, little was it dreamed that the enterprise so unostentatiously begun, was destined to grow into a complicated and powerful agency, whose grand and benignant results should hal-
low every land and gladden the hearts of every people.

When, a few years later, some English dissenters, beginning to feel the inward leapings of a new and heaven-born yearning for the redemption of the heathen world, a small but faith-inspired circle of preachers, championed by the bold and earnest Carey, and a few zealous laymen, represented in the intelligence and devotion of Thomas Stokes, set themselves to work to quicken and inform an insensible and careless church as to its

relations to distant and idolatrous millions, who then, even among the most sanguine and prophetic, would have dared to estimate the triumphant achievements of the religious faith and self-sacrificing heroism which these noble men were striving, by means so inadequate and almost insignificant, to rally and marshal in the name of Jesus?

Since that day missionary agencies of every kind have been multiplied, until there is no land so dark or distant, until there is no isle of the ocean so lone or desolate, that Christian hands have not carried to their inhabitants the bread of life, and uplifted to their wondering eyes the soul-subduing banner of the Nazarene.

Since then the Bible has been given, and the glad tidings of salvation published, in almost every language spoken under the whole heaven.

Since then two millions of the heathen have turned from their idolatrous shrines to the altars of the true God; thence, as pilgrims to a heavenly country, they have taken "the way the holy prophets went," and, singing on earth for a while their songs of sorrow and deliverance, to-day are

numbered with the redeemed in glory who gratefully strike their harps to the new song of Moses and the Lamb.

Of the wide-spreading and benign influence of the American Tract Society, as related to its comparatively small and humble beginnings, the Rev. Dr. Knox, when in 1846 he laid the cornerstone of the new Tract House, New York City, thus speaks:—

“Thirty years ago there was an organization for the distribution of religious tracts in this city, in connection with which were John E. Caldwell, Zechariah Lewis, and others, who, like them, having served their generation, by the will of God have fallen asleep. It was small and feeble. We had then a few tracts, poorly printed, on coarse paper, and at large expense. But it was the commencement of good.

“The organization of the American Tract Society a little more than twenty years ago formed a new era in the history of the tract cause. Upon the labors of this institution God has put the seal of his approval. The judgment will reveal the multitude, by its instrumentality redeemed from ignorance and error and sin, and converted unto God ; and the greater multitude guided and comforted, sanctified and cheered, in the

path of life. In this service good and holy men have lived and labored and died. Milnor and Page, Willett and Greene, Summerfield, Pierson, and Stokes, now shine in the firmament of glory, in the splendor of those who have turned many unto righteousness.

"The institution — with the extent, variety, and excellence of its publications; its tracts and its volumes, every one of them teeming with vital truth; its colporters and agencies — is reaching abroad its influence throughout the land, throughout the world."

And thus the accomplished results of a century in the history of the church the most remarkable, perhaps, since the apostolic age for the facility and energy with which it has grasped and organized the full idea of Christian evangelism in the employment of instrumentalities, associational as well as ecclesiastic, are confessedly but the outgrowth of the efforts of earnest and conscientious men, who, in a self-denying spirit, and in a practical way, performed the personal, every-day duties to which God called them, and did them well.

It has always been true, and it ever will be, that the path of duty is the direct road to earth's best success and heaven's sure reward. To attempt

deeds because they are conspicuously great, to strive for the attainment of results that will be deemed brilliant, without putting forth a corresponding effort of an honest and homely endeavor, is at best but a higher type of ambitious vanity, and utterly delusive as to the achievement of even the cheap and unsubstantial honors of the world.

I would scarcely venture to leave the sacred precincts of the faithful and unpretending life that has been thus imperfectly but lovingly sketched, did I not in his behalf, of whom I have written, disclaim all merit for what he attempted and what he accomplished, save that which he derived from Him by whose grace alone he stood, and in whose strength he labored to the end. My reverent love for the dead, whose life-form has in this brief Memorial been chiselled, were there no higher motive, would lead me, as I leave his figure in this modest niche, to give to his sculptured arm that upward inclination that would point towards heaven as the source of the power which had redeemed his soul and animated it with all its best and noblest inspirations. And as an inscription

surmounting the name of THOMAS STOKES, which shall appropriately voice the sentiment of his whole heart and all his life, I deeply grave the inspired motto: —

“Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy
name give glory.”

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